



from the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee
P.O. Box 11867 • Room 227 Blatt Building
Columbia, South Carolina, 29211
Communications Office, (803) 734 - 6164

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EOC approves changes to high school and primary school report card ratings

EDITOR'S NOTE: specific information concerning school and district ratings can be viewed in the 2003-2004 Accountability Manual available on the EOC Web site at www.sceoc.org.

Columbia – The EOC has approved several changes in the criteria rating South Carolina high schools and primary schools.

Changes to the high school rating criteria are a result of recommendations from a ratings advisory committee comprised of high school principals and district administrators from around the state.

Three changes in the criteria for rating high schools begin this year. They are:

- To include the passage rate (score of 2 or higher) of high school students who are in their second year after their initial enrollment in the ninth grade on both the English Language Arts and Mathematics subtests of the new High School Assessment Program (HSAP) – the new high school exit exam.
- The first attempt HSAP passage rate criterion is weighted at 20 percent.
- To delay the penalty lowering an Absolute Rating of Excellent or Good one level for those high schools who do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for all students. This penalty would remain for all other schools and school districts.

The three remaining criteria for rating high schools are as follows:

- The percentage of tenth grade students who pass the Basic Skills Assessment Program Exit Exam by the spring graduation two years later (longitudinal). This criterion is weighted at 30 percent.

- The percentage of seniors eligible for the LIFE Scholarships (meeting both SAT/ACT qualifying score and qualifying grade point average as defined by the Commission on Higher Education). This criterion is weighted at 20 percent.
- The graduation rate, which is the percentage of all (including students with disabilities) ninth grade students four years prior to the year of the report card who earn a standard high school diploma (not GED), adjusted for transfers in and out of the school. This criterion is weighted at 30 percent.

Other committee actions regarding high school ratings were to approve:

- The elimination of the LIFE Scholarship criterion beginning with the 2005-2006 school year and replacing it with the percent of students passing end of course exams in Algebra I, English I, Biology I, and Physical Science.
- Calculate the high school Improvement Rating for 2003-2004 by recalculating the school's 2002-2003 Absolute Ratings index (score) using its HSAP Field Test results for that year and subtracting it from the 2003-2004 Absolute Rating index which is based on the 2004 HSAP performance.
- Find a means to include high school students who obtain a high school diploma as a result of attending summer school following their senior year in the school's calculation of its graduation rate.

The two criteria changes for rating primary schools (about 25 SC schools) are as follows:

- To eliminate the Professional Preparation criterion, which is the percentage of teachers in the school with degrees and certification in early childhood education. This criterion was scheduled to be added in 2004; however, a State Board of Education regulation to take effect in 2005 requires all kindergarten through first grade teachers to be early childhood certified and all second grade teachers to be either early childhood certified or elementary education certified.
- To delay the addition of an Environmental Measure for Program Improvement criterion until the 2004-2005 school year. The delay is necessary to allow the State Department of Education (SDE) time this spring to pilot the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale- Revised assessment, an environmental measure for program improvement. Results of the pilot will be used to determine the weighting for this criterion.

The remaining criteria for rating primary schools are as follows:

- Student Attendance Rate
- Pupil Teacher Ratio
- Parent Involvement
- External Accreditation
- Number of professional development days devoted to knowledge and skills working with young children.

The EOC is an independent, non-partisan group made up of 18 educators, business persons, and elected officials who are appointed by the legislature and governor to monitor and review the implementation of the 1998 South Carolina Education Accountability Act, the Education Improvement Act, and the K-12 system.

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